



West Country Schools Trust

Volunteers & Parent Helper Policy

Rationale

We believe that the education of our children should be a shared experience and that parental involvement in all aspects of school life is at the heart of that involvement. We believe that external visitors can also enhance the topic work within the school.

Aims

- To share information with parents about pupil activities, curriculum development, legal requirements, etc.
- To seek co-operation with progress in learning, and find ways of involving parents and external visitors in the life of the schools across the Trust and the children's work.
- To encourage feedback, e.g. to encourage parents and other members of the community to express their opinions
- To involve parents in the development process.
- To thank parents and voice praise for activities and support.
- To maintain the ethos and standards of good practice across the Trust.
- To involve local people in everyday school life and to develop an active link with the communities we serve.

Purpose

Our policy is to keep welcoming schools, where children can share their experiences with visitors and with their own and other parents. We do this by:

- Encouraging parents and members of the local community to come into our schools to share areas of expertise which are linked to the topics being studied
- Drawing their attention to any special achievements of their child (however small)
- Positively aiming to foster informal discussions on a day-to-day basis about any matters of minor concern, information or praise
- Parents who can not easily come into school are free to contact us by telephone or written note before, after school and during lunch time
- Encouraging parents to come and hear children read

Parents Helping in School

It is our policy to accept offers of help in our schools and positively encourage it. In the interests, however, of the safety and well-being of all pupils, parents and external visitors who regularly help at school will be asked to undergo a DBS check, have an interview with the Headteacher and to be familiar with the Trust's Safeguarding policies.

It is the responsibility of the teaching staff to give clear guidelines and instructions on the specific tasks to be undertaken by parents and other visitors and to ensure that feedback is given on the outcome of these tasks. It is important that both parent and teacher are comfortable with the tasks/children/age range chosen. There is an information pack attached to this policy which should be given to parents/volunteers to give them a brief understanding of the day to day running of the school and some health and safety advice.

Should there be a concern about any of the above that must be brought to the Headteacher who will decide how to deal with it.

Staff should inform the Headteacher of any parent helpers or other visitors that come into school.

Appropriate Help by Parents and Other Volunteers

- Help in the classroom when desired on appropriate tasks planned and directed by the teacher, working with a small number of children;
- Help with preparing materials etc.;
- Using special expertise to teach small groups of children on a regular basis or as a one-off experience related to a project;
- Providing extra adult help on school visits;
- Helping in or organising out of school clubs;
- Coming to read a book to a group of children in the library
- Activities such as school cooking, needlework, after school sports clubs, DTEC, science activities
- Listening to children read

When parents and volunteers help with a small group the discussion and talking which takes place to extend the children's learning is valued greatly by staff.

When parents and volunteers come into help, the teacher will be available before the lesson to explain the tasks. Once the lesson has started visitors should respect the learning environment and see the school administrator about any urgent matters.

Reservations

The involvement and help of parents and other volunteers in our schools is greatly valued, but our first concern must be the children and in the unlikely event of confidential information being disclosed outside a Trust school or a parent's or visitor's involvement proving detrimental in any way, the Local Governing Board through the Headteacher or Principal reserves the right to refuse the help of that parent or visitor again.

Parents and visitors should bear in mind that staff cannot disclose personal needs or circumstances.

It is vital that information and discussions that occur within schools are not discussed with anyone other than the class teacher, Headteacher or Principal. If a helper is concerned over any behaviour issue or personal disclosures these should be discussed with the class teacher Headteacher or Principal only.

Any issues which occur within a Trust school are the sole concern of the Headteacher, Principal or class teacher and the child's parents who will be informed by a member of permanent school staff.

While the use of volunteers within the Westcountry Schools Trust is welcomed as a means of enhancing the work of teachers and support staff and of developing parental/community links, volunteers should not be used in any way that detracts from the work of the established staff or erodes employment prospects.

Identifying People Barred by the Secretary of State

The Westcountry Schools Trust will require DBS checks for all staff, volunteers, trustees and governors working with children in the schools across the Trust. Parents/Volunteers who have not been DBS checked will not be left alone with children. Any parent accompanying a residential visit will have been DBS checked.

Health and Safety

It is important that parents/volunteers who work within familiarise themselves with the policies and practices of the Trust and schools including those relating to Health and Safety at work. The Headteacher/Principal will direct volunteers to the Staff Handbook to read appropriate policies. Any volunteers who will be working alongside pupils must be made aware of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures and the Policy on Physical Contact between Staff and Pupils.

Insurance

Volunteers within Westcountry Schools Trust are covered by the Trust for third party liability and should be made aware of this. It may be that individuals will wish to arrange their own personal insurance to cover both personal injury and theft of, or damages to, their own equipment.

The Headteacher/Principal will be responsible for ensuring that volunteers do not have unsupervised access to children. She will take all reasonable steps to confirm the identity of the person.

Volunteers who transport children other than their own should refer to the school's policy which has details of child seat requirements. They will also be made aware that they should check with their car insurance company to ensure that they do not contravene their insurance policy. The volunteer will fill in the school's form for 'Children being transported in a volunteer's car'. There will always be 2 or more children in a volunteer's car.

Working with the children and students

We value all volunteer help greatly. ***There may be times when you are aware that you will be expected to keep confidentiality. Please do not discuss the behaviour or academic achievements of any pupils with anyone other than the class teacher or Headteacher/Principal, and certainly not outside of school.***

Teachers should make clear to you how they would like you to support the children. If you are at all unsure, please do not hesitate to ask for clarification. Children enjoy the help given by parents, which is often personal and unhurried. We try to encourage and praise children's efforts and speak to them in a way we would like to be spoken to. If you feel that children are not speaking to you in a courteous manner,

please **let the teacher know**, so that this can be re-modelled to the child. At all times we expect common courtesy and good manners

If when working with the children you feel that anything should be brought to the teacher's attention, please do so.

Child Protection

The Trust has responsibility for Child Protection and this is managed via the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL). If you have any concerns about such issues, however small or trivial you may think they are, please share these with the DSL. Please **do not** question children or prompt them to disclose information.

HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION FOR SUPPLY TEACHERS AND VOLUNTEER HELPERS

A copy of the Health and Safety Policy can be found in the policy file in the office of each of the schools across the Trust. Please note the following, for your safety, and emergency procedures.

Medication

Only clearly labelled prescription medication is administered during the school day, and this is once a specific form has been completed by the parents.

Asthma

There is a list of children who suffer from asthma and other medical conditions in each class register. Children's inhalers are kept in the classroom: in F and KS1 this is the teachers' safe cupboard and in KS2 in a place they know and access is free.

Emergencies

-Accidents

- Inform headteacher or other teacher by child messenger
- Stay with the emergency
- Headteacher or staff member will ensure correct procedure is followed
- You may be required to help fill in accident forms
- Keep Headteacher/Teacher in charge informed at all stages and actions taken.

-Fire

- Ensure all emergency routes out of the classroom are free from obstacles
- Sound alarm and assist with evacuation of class you are working with, closing doors
- Assemble in playground
- Report to administrator or headteacher

-Illness

- Make the child comfortable
- Inform member of staff
- Monitor

Agreed at Trust Board meeting dated 15th May 2018